Chapter 7
Religion, bilingualism and acculturation

7.1 Religion as a driving force

This chapter deals with the numerous interrelationships between religion, language and ethnicity, the first one considered herein an external factor impinging on the development of indigenous languages, on elite bilingualism amongst speakers of indigenous languages, and on the creation of ethnicity within a framework of categorical adscription. Religion was the driving force in the Iberian Peninsula for Christian resistance has a steady record first during the invasion of the Visigoths and immediately after with the prolonged incursions of the Muslims in Spain. In the history of Spanish, Christian confrontation and the rise of Castilian are inseparable inasmuch as Castilians led the movement of expulsion of non-Christian groups during the *Reconquista*. Spanish speakers were accustomed to fighting the infidels; those who were not engaged in real battles were used to hearing about religious wars; still some others knew first hand of the conversion process that consequently affected the life of many individuals. The religious endeavors of the mendicant orders assigned to New Spain illustrate, too, the accomplishments in the areas of language learning and teaching, translation of sacred texts, lexicography, and descriptive grammars, all these endeavors oriented towards the major challenge posed by conversion. There is agreement in that all these scholarly pursuits flourished in a new environment following the initial catastrophe, which entailed the defeat of the Aztecs and the destruction of the Aztec Empire. The Mexican Renaissance in the realms of history, linguistics and religion began in 1524 and ended ca. 1580 (cf. Hidalgo 2006a).

This chapter also explores the language contact situation that ensued as a result of the intermingling of Spanish speakers and speakers of indigenous languages. The most significant group acquiring or learning Spanish as a second language were the Nahuas inhabiting the Valley of Mexico. Speakers of indigenous languages were first exposed to Spanish via informal encounters with Spanish speakers who settled in the area of Nahuatl influence and with those who were in charge of emergent institutions such as the *encomienda*, the *repartimiento*, and other forms of labor and free employment. Exposure to Spanish did not occur swiftly or massively but slowly and selectively first in religious domains and almost simultaneously in the work domain. Bilingualism amongst members of the indigenous elites was the result of education in the new Christian faith within the cloisters of the mendicant orders. Second, native leaders who were not affiliated with mendicant orders found ways to accommodate themselves to the

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conditions imposed in the new environs of New Spain, where Spanish speakers built new institutions protected by legislation enacted in both Spain and New Spain. The caciques, *principales* or *señores*, and some other Indian officers were in direct contact with some Spanish speakers from whom they must have learned at least basic Spanish, which was useful to maintain important posts in local governments. Third, the mass of speakers of indigenous languages nonetheless retained their language and forms of organization for about one hundred years. Massive bilingualism was more likely initiated in the 17th century, while vestiges of language contact features are found until the 18th century.

Contact between and among ethnic groups was conducive to miscegenation, which in turn led to the emergence of different socio-ethnic categories: *españoles*, *criollos*, *mestizos*, blacks and mulattoes, among others. The mass of indigenous speakers can be distinguished by their reactions toward the newer multicultural / multilingual situation: some of them were acculturated Indians or *indios ladinos*, and many others were merely resistant to the Spanish language and the institutions and domains in which it was used. Early bilingualism among the elites of Nahua origin has been consistently reported in diverse sources; this contrasts with another type of bilingualism facilitated by the advent of the hacienda as another form of socialization between and among the different ethnic groups. An economic transformation of the colonial period unfolded in the 17th century.

7.2 Population losses and language shift

The reduction of Indian tributaries can be used as a criterion to estimate the losses of speakers of indigenous languages. Language shift was aided by epidemics responsible for large-scale population decline. The most serious epidemics have not been clinically identified (smallpox, typhus, typhoid or measles) because pre-conquest analogues have not been found. Spanish methods of treatment added anemia to the other debilitating consequences of disease. In the Valley of Mexico, the Nahua population declined from a high of 117,270 in 1570 to a low of 22,659 in 1644; about five decades later, in 1692 only 24,566 tributaries were recorded; and in 1742 there were only 37,854. The final estimate before the end of the colony ranges between 47,080 in 1787-1794 and 64,485 in 1797-1804, which represented ten per cent or more of the total tributaries of New Spain (Gibson 1964: 137, 142). The reconstructed data are useful to show the dimensions and directions of language shift. External factors contributing to language shift—other than the losses resulting from disease amongst the speakers of indigenous languages in Mesoamerica—are distinguished as junctures that either accelerated it or delayed it. The glaring reason of language shift was the massive loss of speakers, which

in turn caused the realignment of survivors to conditions restructured by the Spanish-speaking newcomers, who found numerous strategies to disenfranchise the non-Hispanic groups from their own cultural traditions and material possessions. Changes to Nahua organization proceeded in strides, going back and forth until the different communities reached high ratios of bilingualism and sufficient Spanish monolinguals to the point that they were no longer considered ethnically Nahuas.

7.3 Factors contributing to maintenance: new political organization

Indians retained memories and their own culture during the first four generations after the conquest. In the 1550's they still knew in detail of the original forms of organization and were able to react accordingly. However, one hundred years later models of organization displaced the aboriginal concepts. By the late 16th century, knowledge of tribal divisions was drawn mainly from legend and historical records. Nine basic ethnic divisions at the time of the Spanish conquest have been identified along with the hierarchy of status in 1519: Mexica, Acolhuaque, Tepaneca, Chalca, Xochimilco, Cuitlahuaca, Mixquica, Culhuaque and Otomi, groups that maintained separate identities, the latter being the only major group of non-Nahuatl origin. In pre-conquest times, miscegenation was not too relevant because ethnic groups preserved separate ethnic affiliations. Migrations, refugee movements, and some systematic inclusion of one group in the area of another resulted in enclaves, not mixtures of populations. Some of the new forms of organization maintained the indigenous together, while others fragmented their communities. After the conquest the surviving groups realigned themselves with their own and initiated a slow process of exogamy with non-Mesoamerican groups leading to boundary delineation and continuity, though the colonial administration altered the original ethnic divisions. Spanish speakers prevailed over ethnic areas because they were in control of conquest, church, *encomienda*, political jurisdictions, and draft labor. The strongest native units were weakened by new relations of power and reinforced at the same time the positions of intermediate groups; the *encomienda* system took advantage of various communities and provinces while the church selected those with a dense population. Also, new jurisdictions created the dependency of a capital town on a surrounding province and vice-versa whereas the labor draft maintained pre-conquest organization where Indian workers were assigned to work according to pre-Hispanic criteria: Mexica, Acolhuaque, Tepaneca and Chalco. Finally, separation continued despite the fact that the Spanish policies favored programs of Indian *congregación* (resettlement),

which occasionally resulted in new associations of peoples (Gibson 1964: 22-23, 27).

More recent proposals suggest that the presence of Nahuatl-speaking peoples is crucial to explain how Mesoamerica was organized from the innovations of the Nahuas, whose world vision was fused with the components of other cultures. The end-result was a multiethnic society with different enclaves sharing many of the features of the Nahuas. Throughout centuries of co-existence, cultural continuity prevailed despite the fact that each group maintained its own identity and preserved the same codes that helped them build a temple or perform their rituals. In this context, language was more vulnerable to change than culture. The first *mestizaje* (blood-mixing phenomenon) is the byproduct of this fusion. The second mestizaje occurred when the Spaniards arrived in the region and gave continuity to the process of blood mixing (cf. Duverger 2007). Nahuatl expansion and diffusion go hand in hand insofar as a number of attributes shared by languages of the culture region known as Mesoamerica have been used to categorize a linguistic area. Distribution of shared features suggests that Mesoamerica's development as a linguistic area at least involved the partial diffusion of Nahuatl traits, given its role as a lingua franca, to other languages of the region. This phenomenon might have occurred either at post-contact times or immediately preceding the Nahuatl Post-Classic or the pre-Hispanic era (Brown 2011)

It has been proposed that after the losses of the Aztec Empire, all groups were exposed to changes related to the organization of space according to Spaniards' views, who were more concerned with urban rankings and designated four Valley sites as cities, i.e. Tenochtitlan and Texcoco in 1543, Xochimilco in 1559, and Tacuba in 1564. Smaller entities such as Coyoacan and Tacuba were considered *villas* (villages) while all remaining populations of moderate or large size were considered *pueblos* (towns). This taxonomy derived from Castile, where cities such as Guadalajara or Toledo occupied a rank above villas such as Madrid or Alcala, which outranked the more numerous pueblos. Lesser entities were known as *aldeas* (very small villages) or *lugares* (places). Other institutions such as *cabeceras* referred to the seats or capitals of Indian governments while *sujetos* meant very small villages or places. Subdivisions of towns were called barrios when they were connected to their seats; *estancias* if they were located some distance away in a cluster of Indian dwellings. Larger communities were the seats of Indian government around which a group of nearby villages was nucleated. The Indian *sujeto* became the Spanish village and was subordinate to the seat where the *tlatoani* (native ruler) resided. In post-conquest times, the *tlatoani* principle served as the basis for the colonial seat organization, the center of tribute collection, and the point for the recruitment of labor. When the native system was finally abandoned Spanish institutions gained more control, the Indian nobility

lost its authority, and Spaniards reorganized the procedures for tribute collection and labor recruitment (Gibson 1964: 32-34).

The structure of Indian society was reflected in the *encomienda*, a single seat or several seats with villages possessing *tlatoani* or a new seat with one village possessing a discontinuous *tlatoani* tradition or none at all. The number of tributaries in *encomienda* ranged from six to some 20,000. The e*ncomienda* maintained one group of Indians and their respective *tlatoani* in close contact. The total number of *encomiendas* in the Valley as of the mid-1530's stood at thirty, with an estimated 180,000 tributaries. Indians built the *encomenderos'* houses in Mexico City, where they deposited all goods collected as tribute; they also worked in farming and mining. The *calpixque* logged in tributes in precious metals, grains, textiles, and many other valuable items, which made the *encomenderos* even wealthier. The *encomienda* compressed the Indian social classes, reduced the authority of Indian leaders, and drained the local economy, but it did not annihilate the Indian society. After the 1550's, no new instances of Indian exploitation were found and new *encomiendas* were granted in the 16th and 17th centuries to noble families in Spain or in the colony with all profits remaining in royal hands. Although the New Laws of 1542 were repealed by the *encomenderos* in 1545, the restrictions imposed on the *encomienda* tribute became effective in the 1550's, and in 1570, the *encomenderos* lost the battle to the crown, which finally eliminated the most lucrative grants (Gibson 1964: 58-61, 62-65, 70). The fact that the *encomenderos* did not succeed in making the indigenous permanent or semi-permanent slaves had a dual effect. On the one hand, the Indians were (more or less) free to seek employment on their own; on the other hand, the new freedom fragmented the most disintegrated communities contributing to language shift. Despite disruptions to the native organization, the *encomienda* was effective in maintaining large groups of Indians working together even after slavery of the indigenous was abolished, a fact that would have a positive effect on language and culture maintenance at least for a few decades after the Conquest.

While the *encomienda* was declining the civil government was appointing its own representatives: the viceroy, the members of the *Audiencia* (court and governing body under the viceroy, or the area of its jurisdiction), and the local *corregidores* (magistrates). Established in the late 1520's, the civil government remained effective until the end of the colonial period. An important branch was the *corregimiento*, a jurisdiction of a Spanish officer in charge of a district, responsible for collecting tribute. The magistrates' salaries depended upon tribute and the daily goods and services provided to them and to their assistants. Each jurisdiction had a deputy, a constable, a secretary, and an interpreter. Magistrates were appointed from Spain, and some of them appointed their own subordinates. By the 1550's the *corregimiento* was overseeing the *encomiendas*, and in 1570, most

jurisdictions lay within the Valley and the intendancy of Mexico. These units were organized around the original Indian seats, which in turn regulated the relations and contacts between magistrates and Indians officials, although the Indian communities had infrequent contact with magistrates, except in confrontations related to petty squabbles over land, debts, thefts, and women (Gibson 1964: 81-85). The empowerment of Spanish speakers in key civil positions also hindered the chances of the indigenous speakers to maintain their communities and the corresponding cultural components.

7.4 New religion and language maintenance and shift

At the beginning religion played a major role in the maintenance of Indian language(s) and culture(s). Much to their dismay, the missionaries assigned to Mexico found a multilingual/multicultural society engaged in complex rituals and unknown deities. Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Tlalmanalco, and Xochimilco, the foremost Indian towns were occupied by Franciscans, where the young upper class Indians were trained to occupy high places in their own society. As in *encomienda* and *corregimiento*, Indian society itself furnished structured jurisdictions for ecclesiastical purposes. Integral seat-village units were transformed into parishes, with the Indian seats becoming seats of *doctrina* (missions) and the villages becoming *visitas* (inspections). By 1570, a total of 86 parochial foundations had been established by the mendicant orders, as follows: Franciscan, 38; Dominican, 30; Augustinian, 9; and Secular, 9 (Gibson 1964: 99-101, 106). At this juncture, religious endeavors are intertwined with the works on translation and linguistics, the language policy of the Spanish Crown launched for the New World before the arrival of Spanish speakers to the Mexican coasts, and with other aspects of re-structuring which were necessary for the settling of a new society of Spanish speakers.

A rescue mission had been initiated by Hernán Cortés himself immediately after the conquest of Mexico; the history of conversion was narrated by Gerónimo de Mendieta, who completed his commissioned chronicle known as *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* in 1595-96 (published in 1870 by Joaquín García Icazbalceta). Divided into five parts, the second and third give a thorough account of the pre-Hispanic religious practices and the emergence of the Catholic Church in Mexico through the endeavors of the Franciscans and the subsequent decline of this Order. In 1522, Charles V authorized the journey of three Flemish friars to Mexico. Juan de Tecto, Juan de Aora and Pedro de Gante reached the Mexican coasts before the arrival of the Twelve Franciscans friars; of the three, only Pedro de Gante lived long enough in New Spain to pursue his religious endeavors

(Mendieta 1596/1870: part 2, chapter 4). The twelve Franciscan friars authorized to sail to Mexico in 1523 were the following: Martín de Valencia, Francisco de Soto, Martín de la Coruña, José de la Coruña, Juan Juárez, Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, Toribio de Benavente, García de Cisneros, Luis de Fuensalida, Andrés de Córdoba, Bernardino de la Torre, and Francisco de los Angeles (Mendieta 1596/1870: part 3, chapter 10). Their presence in New Spain had major consequences for the language and religious policy enacted in the new soil, inasmuch as the friars believed that their mission was to facilitate the simultaneous conversion of thousands of souls; this would presumably compensate for the adepts lost to other religions, particularly Lutheranism. Gerónimo de Mendieta was convinced that once Aztec rulers admitted baptism, its massive reception among the Indians would follow smoothly. The friars had to be actively engaged in understanding and even participating in pre-Hispanic socio-political structures; only by being participant observers could they devise an original Nahua Christian subjectivity. Conversion was in appearance a swift process, while teaching Spanish to thousands of individuals was a gigantic project that motivated the friars to initiate their tasks by learning the native languages themselves. This had a positive effect on indigenous language maintenance for at least five decades.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, many other members of the mendicant orders were devoted to describing, using, promoting, and translating the indigenous languages they gradually encountered in the field. Understanding the indigenous population of Mexico and recording their languages was a unique endeavor undertaken by the Franciscans and their aides, who produced one work of philology after another. Between the late 1540's and the late 1570's, the Franciscans wrote two grammars, one Spanish-Nahuatl and Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary, and an encyclopedic corpus covering every aspect of pre-conquest Nahua life in Nahuatl texts drafted by the indigenous aides (Lockhart 1992: 6). The scientific studies conducted by those engaged in missionary linguistics emphasized the exhaustive description of Nahuatl language, history, cosmogony and all aspects related to Nahua culture. Nahuatl was the most frequently and widely spoken language in the Mesoamerican area. In spite of the shattering experiences of the conquest, Nahuatl speakers were still the quantitative majority while the functions of their language were being reallocated to different domains, primarily to the arena of Christianization. Those in charge of this mission confronted the resistance of indigenous peoples and the different strategies they utilized to feign that they were indeed accepting the values of the new ethno-culture.

On the surface all works of grammar, translation and linguistics were favorable for language maintenance but as the study of Mesoamerican ethno-cultures advanced, Spanish-speaking clerics took over the tasks of Christianization. Some of the scholarly endeavors of the 16th century rearranged notions of Christianity

and brought them together in a fused scheme that is not easily understood. The lives and works of Alonso de Molina and Bernardino de Sahagún offer clues to look into the most creative aspects of religion, language and ethnicity. Alonso de Molina was probably born in Extremadura ca. 1513 and arrived in New Spain with his parents and a younger brother when he was nine or ten years old. The friars belonging to the Seraphic Order asked his mother to allow the oldest child, Alonsito, to live with them in the convent. Alonsito, who had learned Nahuatl with childhood playmates, moved in with the friars, lived in his cell and followed their steps throughout his life. He professed in the Convent of St. Francis in 1528, was ordained in 1535 or 1536, and worked as a preacher for several decades. In this way he became the interpreter of the friars and the teacher of the preachers of the Gospel. In the face of opposition of newcomers from Spain with different attitudes and ambitions, his abilities as an interpreter were subsidized by the Franciscan Order (León Portilla 1970: xx-xxvi).

The transliteration of Nahuatl and other languages into Romanized writing was not the result of frivolous undertakings but the outcome of meticulous scholarship. Alonso de Molina is the author of the *Doctrina Christiana* (1546), *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* (1555 and 1571) published in Mexico City by the local printer (House of Antonio de Espinosa), and *Arte de la lengua mexicana y castellana* printed in the House of Pedro Ocharte in 1571. He is also the author of the *Confesionario Mayor* (Confession Manual) published in 1565, 1569 and 1578 in both Spanish and Nahuatl. In the prologue to his *Vocabulario* (1571), he underscored the need to learn the indigenous languages, since he himself had had some difficulties: Nahuatl was not his mother tongue, thus it was not natural to him. He had to practice and use it and learn in addition "the variety and diversity of its words". He also explained that he had followed the Grammar's model presenting the Castilian part first and the Nahuatl part next.

In the *Confesionario Mayor*, Spanish words appear as independent lexical items (e.g., *ciudad*, *faraón*, *hostia*, *jubileo,* and *leyes*). Some other times they appear with Nahuatl prefixes or suffixes as in ***mo****compadre*, ***t****anima*, *ereges****me***, s*abadot****ica***, *sancto****huan***, *cruz****titech***. A total of 195 *hispanismos* of varying frequency were inserted in the Nahuatl part of the manual, e.g. *Dios* (143), ánima (58), *Santa Iglesia* (55), *sacerdote* (54), *sacramento* (52), *confirmación* (37). Allusions to God appear in the two languages as in *Dios*, *toetl*, *totecuijo Dios*, *incelteotl Dios*, *teolt Dios*, *tlatocatzin Dios*. Seventy borrowings from Spanish (known as *hispanismos*) refer to topics of the Catholic religion and are divided in eight semantic categories: divinity and enlightened beings, dignitaries and ecclesiastical / governmental offices, feasts and calendars, sacraments, objects and sacred places, teachings and Christian moral, social and religious relationships, and objects.

Forty of the 70 *hispanismos* had appeared in the Spanish section of Molina's *Vocabulario* with the corresponding translation, for instance, *santo – tlayectilli*, *profetas – tlaachtoplaitoani*, *confesión – teyolmelahualiztli*. Scholars have questioned Molina's decision to insert Spanish words that had already been translated in his *Vocabulario*. The most plausible explanation has to do with religious dogma. Original concepts such as *Trinidad*, *Espíritu Santo*, or *Redención* were not easily decanted into Spanish; thus, the presentation of new Christian notions would prevent deviations from orthodoxy. The comparison of the *Confesionario Mayor* with the *Confesionario Menor* (an unpublished synthesis) confirms that the most frequent *hispanismos* refer to basic notions of Christianity: *Anima* (58 and 7); *Santa Iglesia* (55 and 10); *Sacramento* (52 and 1); *sacerdote* (54 and 6); and *testamento* (19 and 1). Those referring to the Sacraments (absolution, penitence, baptism, confession, confirmation, and ex-communion) appeared in the two languages presumably because Molina wanted to clarify that their equivalents were separated from the indigenous religion (Máynez 1998, 1999; and 2002).

Alonso de Molina was resourceful not only because he was bilingual and bicultural but because he knew the two religions very well and was aware that they could not be easily reconciled in their most fundamental tenets. The *Sumario de las indulgencias concedidas a los cofrades del Santíssimo Sacramento traduzido en lengua Mexicana por el muy Reuerendo Padre Fray Alonso de Molina de la orden de los menores por mando del muy Ilustre y Reveredíissimo señor Don Alonso de Montúfar, Arçobispo meritíssimo de México* [Summary of indulgences granted to the members of the Sacred Sacrament translated into Nahuatl by the Reverend Father Friar Alonso de Molina of the Order of the Minors as per instructions of His Illustrious and Reverend Alonso de Montúfar, Archbishop of Mexico] (1568-1572), was redacted in reverential Nahuatl according to the rules of *tecpillatolli* (learned style). This manuscript expressed in Nahuatl those concepts of Christian thought without equivalents in this language. In order to prevent the invasion of Spanish terms referring to spiritual Christian notions, Molina became an expert in the creation of neologisms. For example, in the native language *mictlan* referred to "the place of the dead" or Hell, frequent in the pre-Hispanic tradition. *Temictiani tlatacolli* referred to "painful killer" or mortal sin. *Titotoyolomelahua* literally means "we straighten our hearts"; for Molina and Sahagún it meant "we go through confession". *Temaquixticatzi* ('Savior') meant "the one who frees people". This unpublished manuscript also uses Spanish loans (Hernández de León-Portilla 1999).

The fusion of the members of the mendicant orders with the indigenous individual could be accomplished through Franciscan principles of piety, poverty, and humility. The Franciscan project was oriented towards the reactivation of the native languages and their protagonist role in the task of conversion. As preach-

ers, they knew of the potential distortions of interpreters so they decided to learn the language of the potential converts. Getting close to the speakers meant getting close to their minds and souls. When Molina elaborated his *Vocabulario*, he was thinking of an instrument that would serve to initiate a dialogue with the speakers of the languages for the purposes of evangelization but with a transcendental aim: to create a common space between two different cultures with a projected future in both the divine and human dimensions. The language-culture equation was instrumental in understanding the way of thinking of the Nahua people, and at the same time, it paved the way for an indigenous-oriented Church. This method is known today as "linguistic immersion" (Hernández de León Portilla 2007). Linguistic immersion fostered bilingualism among the members of the indigenous elite who were seriously engaged in studying the works on Christian religion.

7.5 Rescuing the past for the future

The ethnographic work of Friar Bernardino Ribeira de Sahagún stands out in the 16th century due to the depth and breadth of knowledge on the history and cosmic vision of the Nahuas and his clear intention to rescue for posterity what was left after the destruction of the Aztec Empire. With his disciple Alonso de Molina, Sahagún was engaged in the recovery mission of the past. They belong to the first generation of humanists who were committed to learning the language and culture of their adoptive land. The work of Molina in the realm of language and linguistics was complemented by Sahagún in the area of history and ethnography. The *Historia General de las cosas de la Nueva España* is an encyclopedia of the Nahua people before the Conquest. The endeavors of humanists of the stature of Molina and Sahagún attest to the significance of the initial fusion of Christian and indigenous practices. Their bilingualism and biculturalism was the key in searching for the cultural patterns that were superficially compatible, but such vast knowledge was baffling to those who had no sympathy for the Mesoamerican peoples. The first generation of the clergy had the inspiration, the endurance and the knowledge to appreciate and adapt to the New World under extremely adverse conditions. The magnitude of the works of the Mexican mission and the cumulative effects during the 16th century had positive effects in the dimension of language maintenance (see Hidalgo 2006a and 2006b). Sahagún's *Historia General* was no doubt ambitious. It sounded like the *Grand e General Estoria* conceived as of 1272 by the Spanish King Alfonso X, drafted with the assistance of his collaborators from the *Escuela de Traductores de Toledo*, the multilingual and

multicultural scholars who contributed with diverse perspectives to making the world history a truly encyclopedic (but incomplete) enterprise.

7.5.1 The second generation and the good memories about Tlatelolco

An interesting manuscript transcribed and published by García Icazbalceta (1886: 360-366) is the prologue to a *Sermonario* (collection of sermons) written in Nahuatl by Friar Juan Bautista, born in New Spain in 1555. Juan Bautista belongs to the second generation of friars ordained in the Convent of San Francsico, where he taught philosophy and theology; he also lived in Tlatelolco, Tacuba and Texcoco. Like other *criollos*, when he was a child, he was not fond of learning Nahuatl, but his fellow Franciscan Francisco Gómez taught him the grammar, and when he mastered it, he finally admitted that it was necessary to teach it to the Indians. While he was a student in the *Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlaltelolco*, he took full advantage of the bilingualism of Nahuatl-speaking students who translated for him anything he found convenient. His prologue to the *Sermonario* in Spanish was printed in 1606, more than two decades after the prohibition to publish materials in vernacular languages had been issued. The prologue sheds light on many aspects of his life and that of his fellow priests. Friar Juan Bautista claimed that with the assistance of colleagues and students he had been studying Nahuatl for 28 years. Some of them were *ladinos y hábiles* ('skillful translators'), and since he was so fond of them he proceeded to offer a short biography to honor their memory.

The first one mentioned by Juan Bautista is his colleague Hernando de Ribas, a native Indian from Texcoco, a religious man and great translator of "Latin and Romance to Mexicano" (Latin and Spanish to Nahuatl). Hernando de Ribas assisted Friar Alonso de Molina when the latter was writing his *Vocabulario* and *Arte* (Nahuatl grammar). He died on September 11, 1597. Friar Juan Bautista was also assisted by Friar Juan Bernardo from Huexozinco, who used to write in plain Latin; he died in 1594. Diego Adriano, a native from Tlatelolco, was so good in Latin ("*buen latino*") that he was able to translate just anything from Latin to Nahuatl with great precision. Francisco Bautista de Contreras, governor of Xochimilco, was a great writer of Castilian and helped Bautista in the writing of *Contemptus Mundi*. Esteban Bravo, a native of Texcoco educated in *Santa Cruz* was so skillful ("*muy buen latino*") that he used to translate just about anything from Latin, and Romance to Nahuatl, and had an admirable lexicon. Next, Don Antonio Valeriano, a native of Azcapotzalco, governed the Mexican Indians for about thirty years. He was one of the best "*latinos y retóricos*" and so proper and elegant that sounded like Cicero or Quintilian. Valeriano was fond of writing

letters in Latin to Friar Juan Bautista, who lamented the scarcity of Indians who knew the ancient language at the time he was writing his prologue. Those who knew Latin used "corrupted words" just like Spanish speakers. Bautista claims that "nowadays one has to be cautious in consulting with Indians about the mysteries of the faith because most likely they will confuse basic notions". He knew from personal experience that Indians had made mistakes, for example: *Dios itlaneltoquitzin* ('the faith in which God believes') instead of saying *Dios ineltococatzin* ('the faith with which one believes in God'), and many more instances like this. The case of Agustín de la Fuente is an exception, for he was an Indian who did help him for about ten years, for he had been trained as a scribe by Friar Bernadrino de Sahagún and had worked with both Sahagún and Pedro de Oroz. He had such ample expertise in language matters that all published materials went through his eyes and his hands before they went to the printer. He died in 1594.

Some of the friars belonging to the first generation (born in Spain) are mentioned by Juan Bautista. Pedro de Gante was Bautista's mentor with whom he consulted for about eight years while they were both at the *Colegio de Santa Cruz*. Juan Bautista claimed that he also learned from the illustrious work carried out by Bernardino de Sahagún, who had the hallo of a saint because he preached, baptized and wrote in Nahuatl for about 60 years. Another friar born in Europe was Arnaldo de Basacio, who wrote many sermons in Nahuatl adjusting the language to the needs of newly converted Indians. In his roster of sermon writers, Bautista included others such as Alonso de Trujillo, a preacher for more than 26 years; and Pedro Oroz, who spent more than 45 years preaching in Nahuatl and Otomi. For the true knowledge of God they had, he could not forget Juan de Ribas, Andrés de Olmos, and Juan de Romanones.

Friar Juan Bautista highlights the information he knew about Alonso de Molina, born in Spain, but arriving in New Spain when he was a child. Bautista knew all the works published by Molina. In closing, Bautista thanks his mentor Friar Francisco Gómez, who was still alive at the time he wrote his prologue; Gómez persuaded him to learn Nahuatl just like Bautista himself was persuading others who did not want to learn. Juan Bautista was also a disciple of Friar Miguel de Zárate and Gerónimo de Mendieta, who arrived in New Spain in 1554 and also learned Nahuatl. According to Bautista, Mendieta was better known for his Spanish skills in the pulpit. In Spanish he wrote the *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana*. Finally, Bautista extols the virtues of the *lengua mexicana* (Nahuatl), for it is truly elegant and rich, and one cannot write only a brief line in it because Nahuatl is more expressive than Latin and Castilian. The young men who were trained in religion and humanities belonged to the trilingual elite protected by the first generation of Spanish clerics, who were in turn fervent believers in their own projects of language and ethno-cultural maintenance.

One of the documented manifestations of a cultural transition to Hispanization was learning writing skills among select children of the Aztec nobility. With the arrival of the Franciscans friars in New Spain began the practice of teaching language(s) in Romanized or alphabetized Nahuatl and the exposure to engravings and illustrations of the Christian icons. In the Amerindian pre-conquest tradition, however, pictographic and ideographic writing was the usual form of expression with the transition to alphabetic writing occurring ca. 1540 and sharing for a few decades the space of pictographic writing. The latter, nevertheless, had to be accompanied by glosses and interpretations in either Romanized Nahuatl or Spanish. Writing was the subtle instrument of acculturation to the demands of the colonial society, since the bureaucracy of the new viceroyalty needed able writers and interpreters to file all kinds of records; the newly trained scribes learned the different writing styles. Despite the prohibitions of the Church and the *Concilios Provinciales*, in the 16th century writing began to replace the oral forms of expression; nonetheless some groups continued to maintain the oral traditions particularly in revival rituals although they did not regain the significance they had had among members of the pre-conquest nobility. They gradually declined and became associated with the reminiscence of the past and with the indigenous masses. At the same time writing in Romanized Nahuatl enabled the indigenous to advance to important posts such as those of *alcaldes* (mayors), *regidores* (councilmen), *escribanos* (scribes), and even governors. In this way, some plebeians gradually invaded the echelons of the colonial order in diverse regions such as the Altiplano, Michoacan, and Oaxaca. The writing practices among the indigenous groups and the social mobility they attained were sabotaged by the Inquisition (as of 1571), as a result of the new censorship that had curbed the publication and circulation of books, but in particular those in Amerindian languages (Gruzinski 1988/1991: 55, 61-64, 68-69, 71-73). These policies reversed the relentless labor of the Franciscans while the political weight of other ethnic groups, i.e. Spaniards, mestizos, blacks and mulattoes, increased in direct proportion to the decrease of the native population. All these changes eventually contributed to indigenous acculturation, tarnished the indigenous Renaissance, and stimulated a more pronounced language shift.

7.6 Strategies of Hispanization

Another effective strategy of Hispanization was the manipulation of indigenous leaders known as majordomos, who were responsible for properties, the sheep herd, the jail, or any other communal possessions that required maintenance or yielded an income. In the 16th century, many towns supported majordomos with

subordinates for special tasks; the former held their positions for long periods of time or were appointed by governors or municipal councils. At the lowest levels of community government a less deliberate process of Hispanicization was taking place. Despite significant losses, the *calpultin* (native town) survived as barrios or estancias or subdivisions of these. Members of the surviving *calpulli* (basic organizational units) recognized the position of their leader, a member of the in-group, while in some cases the barrio and estancia officers adopted ranks that were equivalent to Spanish posts. Lower-rank Indian officers enforced attendance, summoned congregations, or inflicted punishment due to absence or to eliminate pagan survivals. Indians were reminded of their obligations by town sectors, each with its banner honoring its barrio saint. Many towns of the 16th century maintained separate religious *alguaciles*, one for each barrio, and posts for Indians ensued as a result of town activities (e.g. *topil de la iglesia* or fiscal). In the interests of Hispanization, salaries were established as incentives to seek and hold town offices (Gibson 1964: 182-185).

7.6.1 Religion and the indigenous masses

Since at least the mid-1550's, the indigenous masses were disaffected with the tenets of Christian religion. Various reports pointed that men were less concerned with church attendance than women; that only a third of the native population of Mexico City were receiving the sacraments; and that even in the most Christianized areas, only about one-fifth of the population attended church. Poor attendance was the result of hostility generated in and around the *encomienda* and the gradual disruption of social order. In a few towns such as Tizayuca, Tequixquiac, Tepozotlan, Hueypoxtla, Zumpango, Huitzilpochco, and Huehuetoca there were insufficient ministers to perform all the tasks. On the main festival days, the curates preached and heard confessions, and Indians who failed to confess were punished. Priests were in charge of counseling betrothed couples, keeping marriage and baptismal books, confessing the sick, and administering the Eucharist. They adhered to the Christian doctrine according to the text of Alonso de Molina or equivalent via an Indian spokesmen working in the courtyards of the churches. In some parishes instruction was given in Nahuatl, Otomi and Latin. Distance from the Church was the end-result of the clerics' excessive work (including punishment). When punishment was no longer recommended, the clerics failed to amend their relations with the Indians. Church jails, forbidden by royal order in the 16th century, were still functioning in some missions in the late 17th century. Through the whole colonial period, Indians served the ecclesiastical institutions

as gardeners, janitors, cooks, sacristans, carriers, acolytes, and musicians, services that exempted them from tribute liabilities (Gibson 1964: 111-121).

Indian associations facilitated the transition from native practices to institutionalized Catholicism. Known as *cofradías* (guilds) parishioner's associations became a part of indigenous life in the 16th century and several hundred operated in the following century. In some towns, almost all members of the community belonged to *cofradías*, where they experienced the feeling of collective identity normally missing in colonial life. *Cofradías* had been designed to protect native craftsmen, who could be audited by inspectors from Mexico City, and who normally looked down on the Nahuatl-keeping records. The funds collected were used to finance the various expenses of annual masses, shrouds, coffins, vigils, Indian-only burials, and the like. The *cofradías* ensured a steady income, payments to the clergy, provisions for church ceremonies, etc. Around these associations the indigenous celebrated services, fiestas, public Christian rituals, processions, dances, floral decorations, fireworks, costumes, and music. The observance of the various ceremonies helped the Indians reconcile the Christian and the native pagan worlds. Communal festivities embodied self-protection or the propitiation of supernatural forces. The most popular cult was that of the Virgin of Guadalupe at Tepeyac, an act of faith dating to the early 1530's. Its fiesta in the 17th and 18th centuries, as in modern times, was the greatest indigenous event in all Mexico. An alternative to other forms of Spanish colonialism, the Catholic Church did contribute to preserve native manifestations of life among Indians (Gibson 1964: 127-135).

The information at hand about religion between the 1520's to the 1580's is conducive to endorse a proposal stating that religious conversion might have been more effective in maintaining indigenous cultures and languages had the religious leaders been supported by the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church. The early colonial project was fostering language maintenance in the domain of religion, and only among members of the native elite and some Spanish-speaking *criollos* who had sufficient contact with the indigenous elites. The Church did not support the training of a native clergy committed to giving continuity to the original mission as it had been expressed by the first generation of preachers and teachers. The Spanish speakers born in Spain became bilingual and bicultural in New Spain, in many cases never returned to Spain, devoted their whole lives to rescue the traditions of the native peoples via religious dogma, but their heritage was not wholly appreciated beyond the second generation of the clergy. Religious endeavors were passed on to the Spanish-speaking *criollos*, who were more concerned with maintaining their own positions than with maintaining the indigenous languages. Spanish-speaking *criollos* were in charge of the parishes and maintained for a long time a hierarchical relationship with their potential

clients. Some of them learned the indigenous languages only to keep a leash on the indigenous masses; unlike their homologues of the early generations of the mendicant orders, they were uninterested in teaching indigenous literacy. In this way the Spanish-speaking members of the clergy empowered themselves while at the same time disempowered the indigenous communities.

7.6.2 Hispanicization of the indigenous

During the conquest period, lower class Indians known as *maceguales* (commoners), occupied vacancies left by local leaders. *Maceguales* engaged in commerce, gained wealth and local influence, served in a monastery and skipped tribute and labor duties. In order to retain their status and pass as *principales*, surviving caciques and other upwardly mobile individuals became thoroughly Hispanicized in their material culture. Some of them even gained the favor of *encomenderos*, who elevated them to positions of gubernatorial power through the creation of Indian governments or *gobernadoryotl*, which were assigned to existing *tlatoani*. Some others even preserved their lands and paid servants through the 17th century. Indian candidates to these positions were persuaded to Hispanicize their speech. Caciques' powers were further reduced after the mid-16th century, when elected Indian officers occupied town offices similar to those in Spain's municipal government. In municipal councils all seats were staffed with Indian mayors and councilmen. Elected officers traveled to Mexico City to consolidate their duties and vice-regal confirmation, well-orchestrated strategies that protected their own against land usurpation. The judges appointed to Indian government were either Spaniards or Indians. Below the governor and council members, the Hispanicized offices required all kinds of tasks such as copying documents for the archives. By the late 16th century, small communities had one or two specialized scribes and larger communities more. Scribes were in charge of eliminating the large pictorial content of pre-conquest records thereby Hispanicizing their own functions. After about 1590, the pictorial forms were abandoned in Indian records, and the services of the Indian scribes were no longer needed in most community businesses (Gibson 1964: 167-168, 177-181). The Hispanicization of Indians in the different domains of the new colonial society (religion, government, and labor) seems to have occurred before full linguistic assimilation took place.

Hispanicized Indians played the role of critical intermediaries and mediators between the indigenous society and the Spanish speakers living in the New World colonies. These acculturated persons were normally of mixed Spanish and Amerindian parentage (mestizos). The label *ladino* was invented by Spanish speakers

who wished to pass judgment on the Spanish proficiency of the members of the out-group but was extended to other forms of acculturation. Even before the conquest of Mexico, "*ladino*" referred to a person possessing variable knowledge of Spanish and certain personality traits such as prudence and sagacity. At the end of the spectrum, those personality traits included, too, slyness and craftiness. *Ladino* Indians were known for their works as petitioners and plaintiffs in colonial litigations over land. They appeared as Messianic leaders rejecting Christianity and adhering to ancestral rituals; paradoxically they also played the opposite role as *fiscales* (prosecutors) or *mandones* (bossy bosses) who gathered people of their barrios and took them to the teaching of the Catechism and the mass. They had all sorts of functions in the church and in the municipal governments. They were artists, mapmakers, chroniclers and ethnographers, and represented a broad range of relationships between the Amerindian traditions and the Spanish Christian culture. For *ladino* historians the reevaluation of the past had relevance in the present because they encoded the practices of the ancient culture into formulas appropriated for the advocacy of their own rights and privileges (Aguilar Moreno 2002).

7.7 Transculturation and miscegenation

Another view on the issue of Hispanization is offered by Mörner (1970: 21-37), who proposed that Christianization was in theory conducive to miscegenation even before the discovery of Mexico and before Indians were living close to Spaniards. The Spanish Crown was in favor of founding racially integrated populations presumably because Spanish speakers would set good examples. The theory of the 'good (or bad) example' can be traced to 1535. It was promoted by Vasco de Quiroga, Bishop of Michoacan, on the grounds that the behavior of Spanish speakers was reprehensible because the *encomenderos* were not acting as protectors of the Indians. To make things worse, some mestizos were also setting bad examples. Mestizos and mulattoes were marginal individuals and were abusing the Indians until they succeeded in their extermination. After major losses, it was questioned if Christianization was equivalent to Hispanicization. Religious leaders blamed abusive Spanish speakers for the epidemics of 1545. About 90 percent of the Indian population had been decimated in communities that were in contact with Spanish speakers. Throughout the 16th century non-exemplary models of behavior were not only abundant but easily contagious. All agreed in the necessity to separate the pristine souls of the natives from contact with Spaniards. Such policies were challenged and contrasting proposals were advanced in order to justify both language contact and social intermingling with the hopes

that natives might learn Spanish by emulating good habits. Hispanization was reiterated more formally in instructions delivered to the Viceroy of New Spain and Peru on June 7, 1550. The means of effective Hispanization was the teaching and learning of Spanish. Others proposed to encourage the emigration and settlement of good Spanish-speaking people to the New World.

In some other instances religious leaders argued that for Christianization to take place it was necessary to eliminate the contact with Spanish speakers. If Indians were maintained in isolation, they could express their desire to be converted provided Spaniards did not get too close to their territory, at least temporarily. Christianization could be achieved without the presence of Spanish speakers, an idea more influential in peripheral areas. This experiment was characteristic of Central America. The policy of Indian segregation was enforced in rural settings but was flexible in Spanish settlements and in mining and factory towns. It was less effective as the pressures of landless mestizos and Spaniards on Indian lands increased. In the urban sectors it was validated on the grounds that Muslims and Jews had been segregated in the Iberian Peninsula. Despite the strategies invoked to separate Indians from Spaniards, the flow of a large number of the former to all the Spanish cities was unrelenting due to the demand of a workforce needed in construction and services. Indian workers began commuting from rural areas to the cities eventually settling in indigenous barrios in the periphery of the Spanish-speaking cities, except when they served as domestics. In the urban setting, the case of Mexico City illustrates the separation of Indians from Spaniards, first in the famous *traza*, from which they were removed and relocated in four boroughs of Tlatelolco and Tenochtitlan. In 1574 the Indians living in these districts complained to the king about the abuses they had suffered because they were living too close to Spaniards, their servants and their slaves. This problem was aggravated as a result of the flood of 1628-29, which resulted in the exodus of the Tlatelolco Indians, a vacuum filled by Spaniards, mestizos and mulattoes. The revolts of 1624 and 1692 put in bold relief the deleterious conditions of the indigenous masses and castes which in the end led to dangerous insurrections. An investigation revealed that Indians were still living among Spaniards and castes both in the central area and in the different districts. In order to evade both the tribute and the spiritual monitoring of the *doctrineros* (priests in charge of missions), many Indians imitated Spaniards looking more like mestizos (Mörner 1970: 38-39, 41, 53-55).

In the big city, it was very difficult to separate ethnic groups, and as they were learning Spanish, Indians were learning evil things. Presumably the contact with Spanish speakers converted them into *ladinos* (proficient in Spanish and relatively acculturated). In contrast, in Puebla de los Angeles, Spaniards welcomed all those who were scattered among Indians. In 1555 the Magistrate of Puebla

attempted to remove them; and again in 1569 and 1607 there were unsuccessful attempts to take them away. Similar practices were enforced in other colonies. Segregation was normally incomplete because in some spaces (e.g. hospitals), it was impossible to maintain all the boundaries effectively. As of 1570 mestizos, mulattoes, and blacks were officially excluded from Indian towns, while the *encomenderos* themselves posed a major problem because they spent more than sufficient time collecting tribute in the Indian towns and setting bad example to the natives. In turn the *encomenderos* would invoke their right to live in their own houses surrounded by servants. In the semi-populated and poor areas such as Guadalajara and Campeche, there was not a problem, but the intermediaries were not interested in protecting their own Indians. Their apathy was advantageous to the Spanish Crown because it helped diminish their influential status in the New World (Mörner 1970: 57, 83, 85, 87).

Justified on moral and religious grounds, the policy on the separation of the Indians was extended to black slaves supposedly because their relations were irregular and irritating. Although the church did not give up its policy to prevent free unions, its success was limited. Black slaves were also setting bad examples and even threatened their own integrity. There were other strong reasons that prevented the contact between Indians and blacks. Slaves married to a free Indian would be legally free and the offspring would also be free. In addition, the absence of Spaniards and castes in Indian towns facilitated the collection of tribute. Finally, Spanish authorities feared an unholy alliance of Indians and blacks against the Spanish power. The earliest attempt to separate the groups by race dates back to the decree issued in Peru and another in 1565 by which Indians were banned from having slaves. In 1551 another decree was issued prohibiting *encomenderos* from having black slaves living in the indigenous communities. Many Spaniards freed their black slaves, and once freed, they themselves re-settled in *palenques* or *cumbes* (their newer communities) though many were roaming around Indian towns and presumably looking for trouble. In the 1570's, about 2,000 individuals or one-tenth of the total Afro-Mexican population (freed or slaved) was hanging out in New Spain's interior (Mörner 1970: 95-99).

The most forceful decree of 1578 ordered to punish blacks and mulattoes if they were living among Indians. In northern New Spain it was reported that blacks were working for their masters in the mines, and for this reason they were already separated from the natives. Mestizos had been excluded, too, from Indian towns because they would set a bad example to Indians; moreover, this group was the fastest-growing and also the most pugnacious and quarrelsome, a real 'pain in the neck' or a 'plague in the local courts'. There was also a mestizo elite, offspring of distinguished Spaniards who had been raised among Spanish speakers but were bilingual in the indigenous language(s). Mestizos had restrictions

of different types, and by 1549, they were not allowed to inherit *encomiendas*. They were excluded from engaging in select occupations such as those of notaries, caciques of Indians, or priests. By the 17th century the position for Indian governor required the knowledge of Spanish and proof of pure indigenous background. This would prevent Spaniards from influencing mestizos who would in turn exploit the Indian masses. Despite the obstacles that prevented black and mulattoes from living in Indian towns, the increase of Spaniards and mestizos residing there and the number of native mestizos continued to grow steadily (Mörner 1970: 99-107; 109-110).

According to the ecclesiastical authorities, Spaniards caused more ambiguities in policy making than any other group. On the one hand, the Spanish Crown had been warned about the abusive manner in which some Spaniards treated Indians. On the other, Indians needed to learn the Christian doctrine from virtuous Spanish speakers. The presence or absence of Spaniards was also related to land property because many had purchased land in Indian towns. The Crown had to pay compensation for the losses and also for the exclusion in Indian towns, which would affect both agriculture and transculturation of Indians. The arguments were not strong enough to permit the residence of Spaniards in Indian towns. The case of Spanish magistrates in Indian towns was worse because they could hire subordinates known as *jueces de comisión* (commissioned judges) who abused their power just like the scribes working under the supervision of magistrates. Many local positions were abolished in New Spain, Guatemala and Yucatan, or were reduced to those deemed to be indispensable. The disintegration of indigenous institutions, the shock of the conquest, the demands of the new Spanish landowners and all other forms of slavery and servitude led to a process of transculturation giving rise to marginal individuals. *Ladino* or acculturated Indians were Spanish-speaking but some of them were marginal. The presence of *ladinos* in the Indian towns was, too, a constant source of apprehension among civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Since 1555 abuses of *ladinos* were glaring for they were acting as though they were merchants and were wandering through the towns and markets. The regulations dictating residential separation were issued between 1536 and 1646, and simply reiterated the 'leave-the-Indians alone' notion. Despite the fact that the regulations were to be effective in all the colonies, some were specific for a certain region. In New Spain vagabonds should not live among Indians and Indians should not offer services to *encomenderos*. Indians should be taught Spanish and should be informed about the liberating content of the New Laws of 1542 (Mörner 1970: 117-119, 123, 125, 130-131).

The presence of other-than Indians in Indian towns was a complex issue for the church since the same priest was assigned to serve all ethnic groups. The growth of "other groups" exacerbated the process of transculturation of the

natives, and at the same time, many *doctrinas* (newer missions) were transformed, in turn affecting the residential separation in the non-religious realm. Separation was based on religious criteria: when a mission was stabilized, it was to be transformed into a *doctrina* in charge of a priest. Its place of residence was the seat of the *doctrina*. Other communities under the jurisdiction of a *doctrina* were considered *visitas*. It was more practical to assign the parishes for Spaniards and mixed population to Spanish-speaking priests. The dilemma of the Church stemmed from the language problem and the natives' cultural background, a dualism comparable to that experienced by the Church, which was split in regular and secular. Parishioners organized their *cofradías* and saint cults in a separate form. Regular clerics prevailed in the New World missions. The division established in the ecclesiastical sphere between the priests of souls for the Indians and the priests of souls for Spaniards was challenged by the intrusion of non-Indians in the *doctrinas*. Finally, it was admitted that the *de facto* separation in the civil society was not possible in the ecclesiastical domain. The missionaries in charge of Indians were also in charge of administering the sacraments to Spaniards residing in their missions, which could turn into parishes in order to serve a large number of Spanish speakers living in Tlaxcala, Tepeaca, Cholula, Tecamachalco and others (Mörner 1970: 142-144).

As the process of transculturation was accelerated in the mid-17th century, new problems were passed on to the ecclesiastical administration. According to Manuel Pérez, author of a manual for priests of Indians published in Mexico in 1713, the priests were not able to distinguish natives from non-natives because the former had changed their attire, hair, and general appearance. The newer mestizos were turned to the priests in charge of Spaniards but did not receive the special treatment for the soul. The change from Indian to mestizo identity entailed the exemption from tribute. In 1684 in the provinces of New Spain (Guadalajara and Monterrey) the missions were suppressed. The administrative hierarchy was complex and included so many functionaries that the status of the Indian vis-à-vis this system was similar to that of a minor who was under the protection of religious and civil authorities and had at the same time limited rights. In the early period there were no special courts for Indians. The Indian towns distributed in *encomiendas* to the residents of a city were normally registered in the same city. Thus the mayors or magistrates were responsible for the administration of justice in their own district. In cities of Spaniards there was an overabundance of judges of Indians, but Indians did not have authority to apply the law against Spaniards. It was deemed sufficient to separate Indians in Indian towns to prevent abuses. But the caveat was clear in that the Spanish city or villa close to the closest Indian town belonged in the same jurisdiction. It was common to find depopulated Indian towns because the dwellers had fled massively to work in the mining sites

or in the nearby haciendas. At the same time Spaniards could leave their villas and occupy Indian towns. Out-migration of Indian towns became more common during the 17th and 18th centuries. For Spanish authorities the policy of segregation and the protection of Indian land were not a source of conflict (Mörner 1970: 145, 148-149, 150, 161, 170).

Initiated since the early 1520's and continuing in the 17th century among the Coyoacan *cacicas* (women leaders) who married Spaniards and born mestizo children, Hispanization was also the result of miscegenation. The 17th and early 18th centuries caciques enjoyed their privileges and displayed their arms on the church tower beside the royal arms. With an intrusion in the succession in the last quarter of the 18th century, the traditional privileges were lost, the family members came to be treated as *maceguales*, and the cacique heir was placed on the tribute lists. On the eve of the Independence from Spain, the caciques were hardly distinguishable from the mass of the Indian population in their economic circumstances and lifestyle. Nothing restored the decayed prestige of the Indian nobility. The word 'cacique' lost its hereditary significance and acquired the meaning of political boss or local tyrant (Gibson 1964: 156-157; 162-166).

The policy on the separation of the Indians from other groups was expressed in varying practices that rendered different outcomes. The fusion of units from the *calpultin* was moved to *cabeceras* (centers with temples, markets and dwellings) where they turned into streets or barrios or *visitas* sharing the parish or the market. The *congregaciones* or the sites of relocation or resettlement occupied the oldest territories of the *calpultin*, although the Indians did not necessarily stay in the newer locations, and some of the native towns were reduced to smaller *congregaciones*. Relocation was supposed to occur on a voluntary basis but at times Indians were congregated against their will. Some other times the Indians ended up running away from an unpopular place, and about a decade later were dispersed in many estancias. Reports to Viceroy Velasco estimated population losses of about 150,000 families during the relocation period. The *congregaciones* occurred in two periods (1550-1564) and (1593-1605), and were carried out after a series of epidemics that decimated the native communities. The underlying motive was not the notion that it was bad for the indigenous to be dispersed, but the fact that conversion, tax collection and administration could be accomplished more effectively if the indigenous were living in accessible places in an orderly fashion near or around a parochial center. The oldest *congregaciones* prevailed with the settlements of central and southern Mexico being essentially the Indian pueblos founded between 1550 and 1564 (Gerhard 1977). These findings lead to surmise two opposite trends, one for language maintenance when the indigenous were rearranged in the original regions, and one for language shift when they were reshuffled unwillingly or ended up in locations that were hostile.

Another interpretation on the policy of *congregaciones* reads that these resettlements resulted from the synthesis of urban centers (*altepetl*) and the rural townships that were scattered on the hillsides. The *altepeme* (plural of *altepetl*) were communities organized in groups and made up related families known as *calputin*. The spot of the *congregación* or urban nucleus in which the Indian dwellers were territorially concentrated was the *pueblo de indios* (Indian town). The newer communities were conceived as a series of dwellings built over a flat surface close to a river to get water, restricted by a semi-circle, and defined by a straight line, which became the center; the layout of the center was like a chessboard from where parallel and perpendicular streets grew indefinitely. The newer Indian towns were detached from their original sacred landscape, but were permanently rebuilt with components of the original culture and the indigenous toponymy, which preceded the name of the patron saint (Fernández Christlieb and Urquijo Torres 2006). This syncretism is equivalent to continuous mestizaje, while mestizaje can act both as a deterrent and a stimulus to language shift.

7.8 Language contact, bilingualism, and socio-ethnic groups

Available records on religious practices and language contact show that there was elite bilingualism or trilingualism in Spanish, the native language of the priests, Nahuatl the native language of the students, and Latin, the language of the Catholic liturgy. Latin was compartmentalized by a small group of religious and political leaders born in Spain and another small group of Nahuatl-speaking indigenous trainees. In spite of the fact that some second-generation Indians were not fond of learning Nahuatl, some of them eventually did (re)learn the language of their ancestors, but this project was discontinued after the mid-17th century. As compared to the effectiveness and swift spread of elite bilingualism, massive bilingualism must have started at the end of the 16th century and was authenticated by the mid-17th century. Since then it has been gradual and continuous. The Catholic Church did endorse the indigenous languages for internal ecclesiastical use but had no intention of promoting them among the speakers of native communities beyond the common practice of evangelization. Some of the activities around the church domain, however, enhanced the use of Indian languages. In addition, language maintenance was facilitated by the policy of segregation, on the one hand, and the need to hire indigenous workers in different economic activities, on the other. Segregation was operational in fostering language maintenance in Indian towns that were not overrun by outsiders; at the same time, select groups of indigenous became bilingual when they had to commute to work. In the work domain they were in contact with Hispanicized caciques or

indios ladinos who had had personal or work experiences with Spanish speakers. Indians working as domestics in Spanish-speaking households had a more direct contact with all-Spanish sites and domains. Finally, Indians who were raised in a Spanish-speaking family were more likely prone to acquire and / or assimilate to Hispanic cultural values and language norms. Elite bilingualism clearly preceded massive bilingualism, and the latter has had continuity over the centuries (Lockhart 1991). From the information available about indigenous labor it is also inferred that the indigenous became bilingual while performing the different activities in the many occupations that unfolded during the colonial period. The indigenous were not only bilingual but diglossic since they learned to use Spanish in the interaction with Spanish speakers in select domains.

7.8.1 Bilingual individuals and bilingual groups

The effects of language contact were multiple. Nahuatl incorporated hundreds of nouns belonging to several semantic domains: flora and fauna head this list, but loans of a high degree of abstraction can be found in the realms of religion, law, economics, measurement, and calendars. This period represented a cultural and linguistic revolution consisting of substitution of Nahuatl sounds with Spanish sounds; and because words lacked any universal spelling they followed the writer's actual speech, conforming to the Nahuatl phonetic system. Since the attitude towards Spanish loans was pragmatic, they were assimilated phonologically, morphologically, and semantically (Lockhart 1992: 285, 294-297; and 1991: 13-14). The inferences about monolingualism and bilingualism are neither abundant nor precise. It is assumed that both Nahuatl and Spanish speakers became bilingual to a degree, although many more Nahuas attempted to speak Spanish than Spaniards Nahuatl. By the second and third generation, the bilingual groups might have been comprised by the majority of the professional translators acting as intermediaries between the two languages, mostly speakers of Nahuatl, Spanish ecclesiastics, and some lower-level labor supervisors who habitually tried to converse in Nahuatl. Members of the clergy had powerful reasons to learn indigenous languages since the Spanish Crown had mandated it since around 1599 and had offered rewards with positions in churches. Finally, Spaniards born in Mexico could speak some Nahuatl in case of necessity, relying on what they must have learned from childhood playmates or servants. The originators of equivalents for Spanish expressions may have been a small proportion of all speakers, especially Nahuas in direct contact with Spanish (Lockhart 1992: 302).

Researchers also propose that in the 17th century there were reciprocal influences amongst bilingual individuals of all ethnic groups, but that the Span-

ish-speaking monolinguals were responsible for phonetic adaptations and substitutions. Derivatives of words like *cacahuate* > *cacahuatería* and *atole* > *atolero* are *nahuatlismos* that consistently appeared in the documentation of the Spanish monolingual population (Mejías 1980: 40-41, 53). Words ending in the suffix *–tl* (voiceless affricate) were adapted to the Spanish ending *–ate* or *–ote* and the respective plurals *–ates* and *–otes*, as in items 1-14 in Table 7.1, though *xicamatl* omitted the ending affricate. The cluster *–lli* was introduced with common Spanish variants: *–le* and final *–l*, as in items 15-23. Common nouns related to edibles such as *aguacate, atole, camote, chile, chocolate, tomate, tamal, zapote*, domestic tools such as *jacal, comal, metate, molcajete, petate, petaca,* and derivatives that emerged in different stages of diversification were borrowed by Spanish speakers and have been preserved with considerable vitality in the 20th century (Lope Blanch 1979). It is assumed that the knowledge of Nahuatl and the use of *Nahuatlismos* in the Spanish spoken in the New Spanish society was a feature that distinguished *criollos* from *peninsulares* with the former having an identity based on the mixed sociocultural values of the two groups. The frequent use of *Nahuatlismos* in various domains has given Mexican Spanish the regional zest that persists until today. The majority of the Nahuatl borrowings adapted in the 17th century have survived in modern Mexican Spanish with the same suffixes that the Spanish speakers assigned them in the past. Furthermore, some of them have been preserved in the United States Southwestern states with different degrees of vitality.

Table 7.1: Nahuatl borrowings and Spanish suffixes

No.	Nahuatl	Spanish	English
1	Ahuacatl	Aguacate	Avocado
2	Cacahuatl	Cacahuate	Peanut
3	Camotli	Camote	Sweet potato
4	Chocolatl	Chocolate	Chocolate
5	Coyotl	Coyote	Coyote
6	Mecatl	Mecate	String, rope
7	Metatl	Metate	Ground stone
8	Mitotl	Mitote	Uproar, brawl
9	Papalotl	Papalote	Kite
10	Petatl	Petate	Woven bedroll
11	Tomatl	Tomate	Tomato
12	Tzapotl	Zapote	Sapote
13	Tzopolotl	Zopilote	Black vulture
14	Xitomatl	Jitomate	Small tomato
15	Xicamatl	Jícama	Jicama

Table 7.1 (continued)

No.	Nahuatl	Spanish	English
16	Atulli	Atole	Hot corn beverage
17	Comalli	Comal	Utensil to cook tortillas
18	Huacalli	Huacal	Wooden crate
19	Mezcalli	Mezcal	Beverage from agave
20	Nopalli	Nopal	Prickley pear
21	Pinolli	Pinol	Drink of toasted corn
22	Tamalli	Tamal	Tamal
23	Xacalli	Jacal	Adobe house or hut
24	Cactli	Cacle	Rustic leather sandal
25	Tzictli	Chicle / chiclete	Chewing gum

7.9 Ethnicity and socio-ethnic labels

When the leadership in religious activities was reassigned to the Spanish Inquisition, the Inquisition prescribed the religious, societal and educational norms of Spanish- and non-Spanish speaking groups. Based on the system of *probanzas*, the Inquisition was effective in selecting groups and individuals according to kinship, ethnic background, or Catholic (un)orthodoxy. The inquisitorial activities stressed the values of the preferred Old Christian population over those who were New Christians or recently converted individuals of Muslim or Jewish descent. Categorization based on religious, linguistic or ethnic traits was bound to socio-cultural status, inasmuch as individuals of Old Christian descent had more and better opportunities in the appointment to prestigious positions or distribution of property in the New World colonies, where a discourse of marked ethnicities unfolded since the early decades of the 16th century. The new discourse pointed to the separateness of non-Christian and/or non-Hispanicized individuals who might have become salient in the emergent colonial societies. The profile of ethnic groups is useful to reconstruct some of the values and the roles of language(s) in a multilingual and multicultural society that was coming to grips with its own unsuspected diversity. Ethnic labels such as *negro ladino* (Spanish-proficient black), *indio ladino*, (Spanish-proficient Indian), *mestizo* (individual of Indian and Spanish background), *cripto-judío* (secretive Jew practicing Catholicism in public), or *judaizante* (individual of Judaizing tendencies) were conveniently exploited to maintain non-Spanish, non-Christian groups in disadvantageous positions. Even the word *criollo* (Spanish speaker born in New

Spain) must have had a derogatory meaning as compared to *español* (Spaniard) or *cristiano viejo* (Old Christian).

At the end of the 16th century, patterns of classification were based on ancestry; for this reason children of Spaniards and indigenous people were considered of privileged status. However, the need to absorb offspring of mixed unions into the Spanish group became less common as pre-Hispanic lineages declined—which meant that the mestizo population was also more distant from the expressed criterion of nobility (Martínez 2008: 147). The participation of African descendants in civil and ecclesiastical tribunals was restricted because their Old Christian status could not be confirmed with all the details needed to issue a *probanza*. Descendants of Africans from the Kongo and Angola had accepted Christianity and were acknowledged for being sincere Christians. In addition, a significant number served in colonial militias, which were avenues to honor and social advancement; in central New Spain, they provided military services as early as the 16th century and in subsequent centuries, they played an important role in the Spanish defense of the circum-Caribbean. Furthermore, they participated in various rural and urban economic activities and had a visible presence in Spanish households (Martínez 2008: 160).

7.10 Hispanization of the Afro-Mexican population

Slave experiences in northern New Spain were not limited to the role of passive companions to Spanish explorers. Early in the 16th century they used slaves in central Mexico to replace the Indians in the mines, sugar mills, and haciendas. Although the promoters of slave trade would have preferred to isolate the black population from the other groups—to prevent revolts and interbreeding—they did not succeed because in many instances African blacks sought women from other castes because they were free subjects and their offspring would be free, too, regardless of the status of the father. Slaves also became free by fleeing and hiding in the mountainous areas occasionally preying upon travelers. The mining centers in the north led to the establishment of communities which expanded towards the north via *el camino real* (the royal road), an artery that connected most places back to Mexico City. The mining industry facilitated the construction of presidios throughout Nueva Galicia (present-day Aguascalientes, Colima, Jalisco, Nayarit and Zacatecas) and Nueva Vizcaya (modern states of Chihuahua and Durango). The black population was introduced in New Spain in these presidios and communities. From Nueva Galicia, miners and companions migrated northward into Nueva Vizcaya, where small towns sprang up and attracted in turn the military presence. Some free black and mulattoes became militiamen

while many of those were sent to the northern outposts remaining there after service. The mining centers became *asientos de minas*, i.e. localities with mixed features of a town and city or a ranch-mine structure protected by military garrisons. These were the locales where African slaves lived and worked, and as their numbers declined, miners requested more slaves (Franco 2004).

7.11 Conclusions

In spite of the endeavors of civil and ecclesiastic authorities to separate the various ethnic groups, mestizaje became the predominant trend in 16th century New Spain. The earliest strategy was the learning the indigenous languages by those in charge of conversion because it was a more practical than teaching Spanish to a large mass of individuals. The result was a hefty production in Nahuatl-Spanish philology imbued with religious pursuits. Such practice was extended to other Mesoamerican languages. A unique type of trilingualism emerged amongst select members of the Spanish and Nahuatl-speaking elites. Such scholarly endeavor ended with the century.

The second strategy to separate ethnic groups was the dissemination of a discourse on the damaging effect that Spanish speakers and Afro-Hispanics were having on the indigenous. After having observed the decimation of the indigenous populations, the strategies of Hispanization ranged from separation to integration. The former strategy was effective, because it aided in the relocation of the indigenous to compact communities where they were closer to their own culture. At the same time, some individuals of indigenous origin experienced a transformation of ethnic and linguistic values to the extent that they looked and sounded like Spanish speakers. This was conducive to the creation of ethnic labels such as *ladino*, a term used to describe and exacerbate the conflictive realities of newer socio-ethnic groups. The indigenous who could not escape having contact with Spanish speakers turned out to be bilingual, and the bilinguals struggled in the process of Hispanization for their survival depended on acclimatization to the environment. In the realm of language, the indigenous began adapting features of colloquial Spanish varieties to Nahuatl, and Nahuatl-accented Spanish emerged as a contact variety used exclusively in some of the indigenous communities. On the other hand, the early wave of Nahuatlization reaching Spanish speakers continued throughout the century and consolidated the integration of loans into Spanish, primarily in the lexical realm. Nonetheless, the elite bilingualism promoted by the clergy had the net effect of compartmentalizing the use of Nahuatl for linguistic and religious pursuits, an endeavor that restricted the scholarly activities in this language to a small group of natives and Spanish speakers. At

the end of the 16th century, Spanish had gained speakers who were initially indigenous or descendants of Africans. Adding speakers of non-European languages contributed to both dissemination of Spanish and diversification.